

Carson National Forest

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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Carson National Forest Will Stand-Down and Reassess Southwest Firefighter Program for 2006

Taos, New Mexico, February 2, 2006 – During the last couple of years the Carson National Forest has seen a sharp decrease in interest in the Southwest Firefighter (SWFF) program. Although the annual trainings are well attended, there have been few opportunities to utilize the SWFF crews and it has been difficult to assemble a full crew when the need arises. There are also some internal process issues associated with administering the program that need to be addressed.

The SWFF program has been in existence for many years and for some members it was a dependable source of income during the summer months. SWFF crew members who hold full time jobs are finding it difficult to respond on short notice to the standard two week fire detail. More and more, fire suppression efforts are relying on specialized interagency hot shot and other suppression crews who are able to accept fire assignments.

In an effort to continue our contribution to the economic vitality of our communities, the Carson will continue to hire firefighters as single resource firefighters through the AD emergency hire program. Contract fire crews are another viable method for fire fighters to remain involved in fire suppression. We are also looking at the possibility of hiring AD emergency hires for a training opportunity in the Carson Fuels program to help with plot data gathering. Because the current SWFF program is being pared down, firefighters interested in remaining on a SWFF program are encouraged to seek alternatives such as training and program information from other agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, or Bureau of Indian Affairs.

With the possibility of an early start to this year's fire season, emergency equipment contractors are reminded that the firefighting training and refresher courses are required.

The firefighting refresher course schedules for the 2006 season are tentatively scheduled as follows:

February 22	8:00 am – 5:00 pm	National Guard Armory, St Road 570
February 23	8:00 am – 5:00 pm	Supervisors Office, 208 Cruz Alta Rd., Taos
March 10	8:00 am – 5:00 pm	NNM Community College, El Rito

For more information, please contact the Supervisor's Office at 505-758-6200.

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